

A Pamphlet for Thinking People
of all Denominations

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**The POPE
AND THE
Great War**

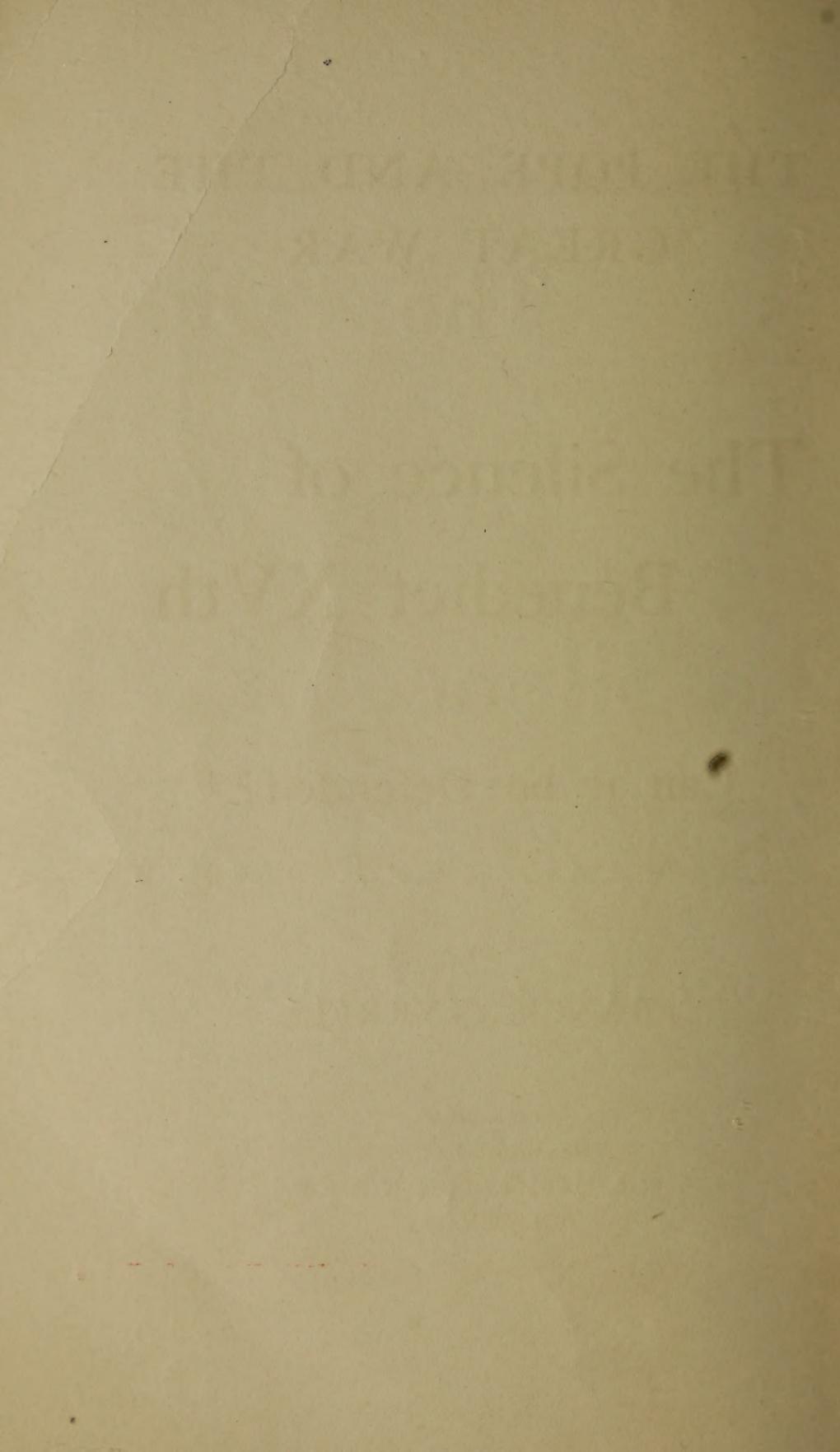
**The Silence of
BENEDICT XV.**

CAN IT BE DEFENDED ?

BY
FRANCIS TYRRELL

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THE POPE AND THE GREAT WAR

The Silence of Benedict XVth

Can it be Defended?

BY

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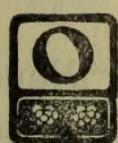
THE POPE AND THE GREAT WAR

FOREWORD.

HE writer of this pamphlet is not a Roman Catholic but he holds that great Christian organization in the deepest respect as being perhaps the most powerful religious force in the world. He believes with good reason that the following pages give concrete expression to the private views of numerous adherents of the Roman Catholic Church in the United Kingdom and America.

May what is herein written do something, however small, to help the cause of Christian Civilization against the greatest menace it has encountered since the days of Attila.

The Pope and the Great War



Of all the tremendous features of the Great War of the Nations, the impotence of organized Christianity stands out in ominous relief and with pathetic significance.

Christianity in its universal aspect has not responded to the great occasion, and the fearless utterances of a few brave men in each denomination cannot alter the collective timidity of the Churches of the World.

Millions of German soldiers from Christian Germany marched to the War with brand-new Testaments in their knapsacks and violated every precept in the devastation and terrorizing of Belgium.

The Neutral States of the World, all of them acknowledging the principles of

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Christianity, have looked on—looked on these bloody campaigns of murder, rape, pillage and arson—and they have done nothing and they have said nothing.

Mighty America, officially, has been just as “prudent” as the smallest of the Scandinavian States.

If any excuse can be offered for “Neutrality” in the face of horrible wrong, it may be urged that the Neutral Countries are governed by “bread and butter” considerations and diplomatic exigencies, which obliges them to take up a position of prudent silence.

The attitude is cowardly but understandable. Not so with the Forces of Religion ; the Churches, whose “Kingdom is not of this World,” and in the whole of its 2,000 years of history Christianity has never been under greater compulsion to vindicate its principles and justify its existence than in the present horrible year of 1915.

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IN this pamphlet I shall deal particularly with the position of the Roman Catholic Church for the plain reason that in importance, organization and universal influence it is the head and front of the Christian System.

Few will dispute this statement and deny her predominance.

In the cataclysm that has burst upon the World, what has the Mighty Church of Rome done; what is she doing, and why does not she speak out?

There has been the ruin of Belgium, the fearful German crime, whose echoes have reverberated throughout the World, but have not penetrated the walls of the Vatican. That august centre has made no sign of understanding, and the Pope is apparently impenetrable.

The world is involved in a crisis of colossal magnitude, and all the fundamentals of our common civilization and Christian humanity are therein threatened.

Is this convulsion of the Nations to

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pass away into recorded history without the Pope—the “supreme arbiter of Faith and Morals” on earth—letting his voice be heard or pronouncing his judgment on the vast moral issues concerned?

To many Catholics such an attitude is unthinkable.

It is an ugly position, and certain Catholic publicists put the best face they can upon it, but the fact still remains that the enigmatic attitude of His Holiness is causing—and justly causing—grave searchings of hearts amongst hundreds of thousands of thinking Catholics, of all Countries.

Earnest Catholics are bewildered and cannot understand what Diplomacy has to do with Religion, and many feel that it is the mission of the Pope to proclaim the Truth and “let justice be done though the Heavens fall in.”

The Popedom wields the greatest power in the World; for consider, how do the greatest Empires compare with the Roman

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dominion over the hearts and minds of 240 millions of the human race?

This power does not depend upon Armies, Alliances, Fleets, or Armaments, but upon the broad basic idea that the Roman organization concretely expresses the Rule of Christ upon Earth, so aptly and beautifully expressed in the lines of the *Magnificat* :—

“He hath put down the mighty from their seat :
And hath exalted the humble and meek.”

What power rightly exercised could be more beneficent than such a spiritual dominion over the minds of men—the effective mobilisation of the spiritual forces of a large section of mankind—against the evils of the material World ?

It is this feeling in the minds of men that explains the tremendous power and world-wide influence of the Popedom.

And thinking men, Catholics, and Non-Catholics, feel with intensity that the Vatican should not be weighed down by the material motives that sadly prevent the

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Neutral Nations from lifting their voices against Pillage and Murder.

The voice of the Pope could be a trumpet call of hope and inspiration to the hearts of millions—to those who are desolate and despairing in Belgium, those who have lost their nearest and dearest—those who have lost their all.

What a God-given opportunity has been bestowed on this ONE man, for the might of all the guns of Europe could not call him to account nor stifle his words.

THE Catholic Church stands for the purpose of everlastingly proclaiming the might of Eternal Right, and the condemning of Eternal Wrong. If it does not stand for these everlasting verities, which cannot, in their essentials, be whittled down by diplomatic or “prudential” conventions, then it can only be an encumbrance on the earth.

These are strong words, but we are living in times of stern realities, when fictions and conventions no longer count.

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The Pope has been given AN OPPORTUNITY such as no human being has ever been given since the dawn of the Christian Era.

The opportunity to lead the moral forces of the world—to be veritably the Ambassador of God.

From the great Palace on the Tiber the "Prisoner of the Vatican" has the power to issue an Encyclical that would make the Lords of War tremble with fear and impotence.

The fit and courageous words of the Supreme Pontiff would sink into all men's minds irrespective of creed and religion, because they would be bound to be impressed by utterances from such an exalted source.

Catholics, Protestants, Pagans, Jews and Sceptics could all be made to bless the name of Benedict the XVth.

Men of all religions and no religion would be profoundly moved, and it is quite conceivable that the War might be appreciably

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shortened with a corresponding saving of scores of thousands of lives.

In the Belgium atrocities the Pope has had all the material for such a protest and condemnation, but if the spiritual driving-force of the Catholic Church is to be throttled by the worldly diplomacy of Nuncios and the careful consideration of the “war chances” of the respective belligerents, then the spiritual potency of the Catholic Church is in a bad way.

And yet the fearless doing of the right thing in the existing conditions would materially increase the influence and the prestige of the Church, for the Pope has but to live up to the conditions of his express vocation on earth, which is the upholding of the Right and the protection of the Oppressed, and the esteem of the Papacy amongst the “Heretics” of the World must increase a thousandfold.

It is a curious and remarkable fact that the leaders of the Roman Church are not alive to the tremendous opportunities that must ensue from the definite arraying of

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the power of the Roman Church on the side of the moral opinion of the world which is solidly against the Central Empires.



THE conflict that is raging from the British Channel to the banks of the Vistula is putting all things into the melting-pot.

There must and will be a revaluation of accepted conditions, possibly a restatement of old beliefs. The influences which hitherto have had weight with the minds of men will be critically examined and weighed up, and obsolete and "found wanting" formulæ will go into the crucible of new Forces or new Movements.

Nothing in the Social scheme of things will be quite the same again. It would appear as if the Papacy was at the parting of the ways. What a staggering blow will be dealt at the prestige of the Church of Rome, if after the War its enemies can look back and say that in the Sack of Louvain; in the massacre of its Belgian

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Priests, in the indignities offered to its venerable Cardinal, and the violation of its Nuns and holy women ; in the pillaging and murdering of the civil population ; in the awful incident where the ship "Falaba" was torpedoed by a German submarine and 100 peaceful passengers were drowned before the eyes of laughing German sailors, and in a secular world seething with indignation at these and other fearful crimes, THE POPE REMAINED SILENT.

What can be the answer to this, and can there be any answer ? Where will be the moral force of the Papacy hereafter amongst men with any pretence to reflection ?

In this world there are always to be found apologists for anything and everything, no matter how dubious and assailable, and therefore, it is not surprising that there should be defenders—timid defenders—of the Papal attitude.

It is explained that the Pope is the Father of all his Flock, and as his children

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include millions of German and Austrian Catholics, he must performe preserve an attitude of "Neutrality."

The Tragedy of the "LUSITANIA."

Since this pamphlet has been printed the Devilish Wickedness of the Germans has been made further manifest by the Torpedoing of the "LUSITANIA" whereby nearly 1500 Men, Women and Children, were drowned in twenty minutes.

In the face of this cold blooded and premeditated wholesale murder of non-combatant, innocent people, a crime at which the German Nation has publicly rejoiced,

Will the POPE still be Silent?

There is again an extreme ultramontane hostile view which holds that the Supreme Pontiff should have no sympathy with heretic England, schismatic Russia, and irreligious France; and although this section of opinion is relatively small, still it has its due weight and influence in the counsels of the Vatican.

These respective views are impressive in a worldly sense and from a worldly standpoint, but they weaken the Papacy on the spiritual side, and this is where the real power of the Papacy lies. Right can

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never be but Right, and Wrong is always Wrong; and every civilized person in the Universe, regardless of creed, knows where to draw the dividing line.



THE cold and frightful fact remains that the Pope—the greatest personage in the World—has not had the courage to raise his voice against the greatest wrong that has ever been perpetrated by one nation upon another—the violation and the ruin of Belgium.

What a sad and dreadful truth.

Considered only from the Catholic standpoint, it was the duty of the Pope to protest against this outrage—an outrage which was committed by what is practically a Lutheran country against a Catholic country.

How can this be denied?

To repeat, the Pope through motives of fear or policy has failed to condemn a monstrous international crime, and he has kept a sphinx-like peace while solemn Neutrality Treaties, and Hague

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Conventions were being reduced to worthless and discarded paper.

The Forces of Darkness which operated in this instance cannot be met by silence and so-called "Neutrality," which is only another name for moral cowardice. Can Silence, under such conditions of Tragedy, be even defended on the grounds of expediency? The Worldly Man, the Sceptic, the Anti-Catholic will smile and in his own way explain the strange silence of the Pope in the ghastly butchery of Belgium.

This man will take the map and, first pointing out the size of Belgium, he will show that the number of Catholics who owe allegiance to the German Emperor is several times the entire population of Belgium. He will probably remark that the Pope was wise in his generation. After all, Belgium is only an insignificant factor in the gigantic war forces of Europe!

But the world will continue after the War, and it is pertinent to consider what will be the moral force and prestige of the Vatican then. What will be its position when in the calm of peace the

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intellects of the World commence to dissect and to put a true value upon the motives of the leading personages, both active and passive, in the fearful drama?

The Rationalists and other hostile critics of Religion will put the whole Christian System on its trial.

They will single out the Roman Church and its attitude throughout the War as a striking example of how far the Christians of this century have strayed from the path of Christ. They will assert with damning conviction that at a time of the greatest crisis the World has ever known; at a time when every voice and every influence for the cause of Civilization and Humanity was of immeasurable value, the "Sitter in St. Peter's Chair" remained dumb and made no protest to the World against the Armoured German Giant when he trampled a little nation in the dust and violated all the sacred obligations which alone preserve the civilized peoples of the World from dissolving into Anarchy and Barbarism.

There can be no answer to this terrible

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indictment, and the sufferings that so world-wide a conflict will bring into millions of homes will make the sufferers too clear-headed to be satisfied with a defence born of sophistry and special pleading. From this it will surely follow that the infallible pretensions of the Papacy will be questioned by certain types of Catholics, and its utility will be criticized by the vast majority of reflective unorthodox thinkers who have hitherto appreciated the Roman Church as a spiritual and moral organization of definite social value.

Critical Catholics—Catholics with the leaven of Modernism, which, despite past persecution, has never been stamped out of the English and American branches, the most virile and progressive sections of the Roman Church—will become more and more hostile to those hereditary Italian influences which command and maintain an eternal majority of Cardinals, of one colour and one country, to dominate the Universal Church and control the mightiest organization of the World.

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MILLIONS of good-living, sincere Catholics, who devoutly believe in the Divine claims of the Papacy, must be sorely troubled in their minds at the present time, for what signs have been vouchsafed to them that in the history of this ghastly War, its counsels are being directed and controlled by a Higher Influence ?

In what manner is the attitude of the Vatican different from the "Neutral" position of the United States, or the Scandinavian and other countries ?

One may well ask, "But how can the Pope be 'Neutral' in the face of Wrong, Atrocious Wrong, Diabolical Wrong ?"

And is not this "Neutrality" a silent deference to the overwhelming power of Germanic crime ?

The true adherents of the Roman Church believe the Pope to be the Vicar of Christ upon Earth. Further, it is the chief title of the Pope.

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The word “Vicar” means, according to the dictionary, a representative, a delegate or a substitute, and the title “Vicar of Christ” can only mean that His Holiness will act and conform to and do all things on Earth as the Representative of, and in the Spirit of His Master were He in the flesh again.

By no process of logical argument can it mean anything else. That being so, can any of us possibly visualize Christ as living six months in Rome since the fateful days of last August and never letting His voice be heard while atrocious crimes were being committed against His Belgian children and the Belgian Priests of His Church? The idea is beyond conception and has nothing in common with the spirit of Hildebrand, Pius Vth, Gregory XIIIth and other great Popes of past ages.

The papal non-committal, “sit on the fence” attitude may or may not be the acme of profound *worldly wisdom*: Time alone can show; but it will more and more incline men’s minds to accept Macaulay’s

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estimate of the Papacy as a marvellous example of human statecraft, nothing more, and from this point of view it will be continued to be studied with interest, but as a vitalizing, spiritual force, operating upon the moral influences of the World, it may sink to the humiliating level of the period of the philosophers which ushered the dawn of the French Revolution.

To be candid, one is bound to admit that this would be a misfortune for the world at large. In this age of materialism so exemplified by the manifold insanities of German "Kultur" the world is the better for every organized spiritual force, from the proud and stately Church of Rome to the humble Salvation Army.

We can afford to lose none of them, and it is not for the good of Humanity that the Papacy should degenerate into a mere splendid mechanism of worldly diplomacy, but bereft of the only true reason for its existence—the driving-force of spiritual fervour.

Can Christianity be “Neutral”?

THE GERMAN ATROCITIES IN FRANCE AND BELGIUM.

Extracts from the Official Records.

ARSON AGAINST CHURCHES AND MONUMENTS.

Arson, still more than murder, forms the usual procedure of our adversaries. It is employed by them either as a means of systematic devastation or as a means of terrorism. The German Army, in order to provide for it, possesses a complete outfit which comprises torches, grenades, rockets, petrol pumps, fuse-sticks, and little bags of pastilles made of compressed powder which are very inflammable. The lust for arson is manifested chiefly against churches and monuments which have some special interest, either artistic or historical.

And the Pope is silent.

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BRUTAL COLD-BLOODED MURDER.

In the confines of the Commune of Courtacon, Edmond Rousseau, liable to serve in the 1914 class, was arrested for the sole reason that his age marked him out as being on the eve of being called up to the Colours, and was murdered under tragic circumstances.

The Mayor, who was one of the hostages, when questioned as to the position of this youth from the military point of view, replied that Rousseau had passed the medical examination, that he had been declared fit for service, but that his class had not yet been called up. The Germans thereupon made the prisoner strip, in order to satisfy themselves of his physical condition, then put his trousers on again, and shot him within fifty metres of his fellow citizens.

And the Pope is silent.

SHOCKING OUTRAGES AGAINST WOMEN.

At the hamlet of Marais in the Commune of Jouy-sur-Morin, the three daughters of Madame X., aged respectively 18, 15 and 13, were with their sick mother when two German soldiers entered, seized the eldest, dragged her into the next room and raped her in succession ; while one committed his crime, the other watched the door, and with his weapons kept back the half-maddened mother.

During the night between Sunday, the 6th September, and Monday, 7th, the soldiers who were scattered among the houses pillaging discovered the widow Bouche, her two daughters, and Mesdames Lhomme and Mace, who had taken refuge under the

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cellar staircase. They ordered the two young girls to undress. Then, as their mother tried to intervene, one of the soldiers bringing his rifle to his shoulder, fired in the direction of the group of women. The bullet, after having struck Madame Lhomme near the left elbow, broke the right arm of Mademoiselle Marcelle Bouche at the armpit. During the following day the young girl died as a result of her wound. According to the declarations made by witnesses the wound was horrible to behold.

And the Pope is silent.

ROBBING AND BURNING THE TOWN OF REVIGNY.

The Germans having completely sacked the houses of Revigny, and carried off their booty on vehicles, burned two-thirds of the town during three consecutive days, from the 6th to the 9th of September, sprinkling the walls with petrol by means of hand-pumps, and throwing into the houses little bags full of compressed powder in tablets. We have been furnished with specimens of these little bags and these tablets, as well as with fuse-sticks of inflammable matter which had been left by the incendiaries.

And the Pope is silent.

CIVILIANS MASSACRED AT NANCY.

The most tragic incident in this horrible scene occurred in the house of M. Basse, who had collected a number of people in his cellar in the Faubourg de Nancy. Towards 4 o'clock about fifty soldiers rushed into the house, beat in the door and windows, and set it on fire. The refugees then made an effort to flee, but they were struck down one after the other

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as they came out. M. Mentre was murdered first; then his son Leon fell with his little sister aged 8 in his arms. As he was not killed outright, the end of a rifle barrel was placed on his head, and his brains blown out. Then it was the turn of the Keiffer family. The mother was wounded in the arm and shoulder. The father and little boy aged 10 and a little girl aged 3 were shot. The murderers went on firing on them after they had fallen. Keiffer, stretched on the ground, received another bullet in the forehead, and his son had the top of his head blown off by a shot. Last of all M. Strieffert and one of the sons of Vaase were murdered, while Madame Mentre received three bullets, one in the left leg, another in the arm on the same side, and one on her forehead which only grazed. M. Guillaume was dragged into the street, and there found dead. Simonin, a young girl of 17, came out last from the cellar, with her sister Jeanne aged 3. The latter had her elbow almost carried off by a bullet. The elder girl flung herself on the ground and pretended to be dead, remaining for five minutes in terrible anguish. A soldier gave her a kick, crying "Capout."

On the same day soldiers came to summon M. Steiner, who had hidden in his cellar. His wife, fearing some misfortune, tried to keep him back. As she held him in her arms she received a bullet in the neck. A few moments after, Steiner, having obeyed the order which had been given to him, fell mortally wounded in his garden.

Towards three o'clock the Germans broke into a house in which were Madame Dujon, her daughter aged 3, her two

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sons, and M. Gaumier, by breaking the windows and firing shots. The little girl was nearly killed, her face was burnt by a shot. At this moment, Madame Dujon, seeing her youngest son Lucien, aged 14 years old, stretched on the ground, asked him to get up and escape with her. She then saw that his intestines were protruding from a wound, and that he was holding them in. The house was on fire ; the poor boy was burnt, as well as M. Gaumier, who had not been able to escape.

And the Pope is silent.

MURDER OF AN OLD MAN AND HIS GRANDSON.

M. Wingerstmann and his grandson 12, aged who had gone to pull potatoes a little way from Luneville, at the place called "les Mossus," in the district of Chanteheux, were unfortunate enough to meet Germans. The latter placed them both against a wall and shot them.

And the Pope is silent.

SACRILEGE.

On August 29th Sister Julie, Mother-Superior of the Hospital, whose devotion has been admirable, went to the parish church with a mobilized priest to examine the state of the interior of the building, and found that an attempt had been made to break through the steel door of the tabernacle. The Germans had fired shots round the lock in order to get possession of the ciborium. The door was broken through in several places, and the bullets had caused almost symmetrical holes, which proved that the shots had been fired point blank. When Sister Julie opened the tabernacle she found the ciborium pierced with bullet holes.

And the Pope is silent.

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MONSTROUS ACTS AT HERIMENIL.

At Herimenil, on the 20th August, the enemy, who had arrived on the 24th, were guilty of monstrous acts. The inhabitants were asked to come to the church, and were kept there for four days, while their houses were sacked and the French bombarded the village. Twenty-four people were killed inside the church by a shell. As a woman who had succeeded with great trouble in leaving the church for a moment was returning with a little milk for the children, a captain, furious at seeing that this prisoner had been allowed to pass, cried out, "I meant that the door should not be opened. I meant the French to fire on their own people." This same captain, a short time before, had been guilty of a revolting cruelty. He was present, eye-glass to eye, when Madame Winger, a young woman of twenty-three, was going to the church in obedience to the general order, together with her servants, a girl and two young men, each of them 18 years old, and, considering their progress too slow, with a word he directed the soldiers to fire, and the four victims fell mortally wounded. The Germans left the corpses in the street for four days.

And the Pope is silent.

HORRIBLE ACTS AT AERSCHOT.

On Wednesday, the 19th August, German troops entered Aerschot, without a shot having been fired from the town, and without any resistance whatever having been made. The inhabitants that remained had closed their doors and windows in compliance with the general orders issued by the Belgian

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Government. Nevertheless, the Germans broke into the houses, and told the inhabitants to quit.

"In one single street the first six male inhabitants who crossed their thresholds were seized and shot at once, under the very eyes of their wives and children."

"The German troops then retired for the day, only to return in greater numbers on the next day, Thursday, August 20th."

"They then compelled the inhabitants to leave their houses, and marched them to a place 200 yards from the town. There, without more ado, they shot M. Thielemans, the Burgo-master, his 15-year old son, the clerk of the local judicial board, and ten prominent citizens. They then set fire to the town and destroyed it."

And the Pope is silent.

THE LOUVAIN ATROCITIES.

The German authorities took as hostages the Mayor of the city, Senator Van der Kelen, the Vice-Rector of the Catholic University, and the Senior Priest of the city, besides certain Magistrates and Aldermen. Weapons, possessed by the inhabitants, had already been given up in the Church of Saint Pierre.

The German garrison which occupied Louvain was erroneously informed that the enemy were entering the town. Men of the garrison immediately marched to the station, shooting haphazard the while, and there met the German troops who had been repulsed by the Belgians, the latter having just ceased the pursuit. Everything tends to prove that the German regiments

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fired on one another. At once the Germans began bombarding the town, pretending that civilians had fired on the troops, a suggestion which is contradicted by all the witnesses, and could scarcely have been possible, because the inhabitants of Louvain had had to give up their arms to the Municipal Authorities several days before. The bombardment lasted till about 10 o'clock at night. The Germans then set fire to the town. Wherever the fire had not spread the German soldiers entered the houses and threw fire-grenades, with which some of them seem to be provided. The greater part of the town of Louvain was thus a prey to the flames, particularly the quarters of the upper town, comprising the modern buildings, the ancient Cathedral of St. Pierre, the University Buildings, together with the University Library, its manuscripts and collections, and the Municipal Theatre.

The Commission considers it its duty to insist, in the midst of all these horrors, on the crime committed against civilization by the deliberate destruction of an academic library which was one of the treasures of Europe.

The corpses of many civilians encumbered the streets and squares. On the road from Tirlemont to Louvain alone a witness counted more than fifty. On the doorsteps of houses could be seen carbonized bodies of inhabitants, who, hiding in their cellars, were driven out by the fire, tried to escape and fell into the flames. The suburbs of Louvain suffered the same fate. We can affirm that the houses in all the districts between Louvain and Malines, and most of the suburbs of Louvain itself, have practically been destroyed.

And the Pope is silent.

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PLUNDERING THE SACRED VESSELS

The sacred vessels which had not been put in safety did not escape profanation. A priest showed us the lower part of a sacred vessel robbed from the Church of Hofstadt. The upper part, in silver, had been stolen ; the lower part, copper-gilt, was found on the road. The precious stones which adorned it had been taken from their settings.

And the Pope is silent.

THE CRIME OF LOUVAIN.

Members of the clergy, with Mgr. Ladeuze, Head of the University, Mgr. de Becker, Head of the American College were sent from Louvain towards Brussels. Several of them, Father Depierreux, a Jesuit, to name one, were shot on the road. All had to endure severe torture.

The women and children remained without food on the Place de la Station, during the whole day (the 26th August). They witnessed the execution of about twenty of their fellow-citizens, among whom were several priests, who, bound together in groups of four, were shot at one end of the Square on the footpath in front of the house of Mr. Hamaide. A sham execution of Mgr. Coentreats, Vice-Rector of the University, and of Father Schmidt, a Dominican, took place before them. A volley was fired, and the bystanders were compelled to applaud. These women and children were released during the night of August 26th-27th.

And the Pope is silent.

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THE TRAGIC EXODUS FROM LOUVAIN.

On Thursday, 27th, at 8 o'clock, order was given to all the inhabitants to leave Louvain: the town was going to be bombarded.

Old men, women, children, sick people, lunatics from the asylums, priests, nuns, were brutally driven like cattle about the roads. We only realize now the atrocities committed during this terrible exodus. These people were driven in different directions by brutal soldiers, forced to kneel and to lift their arms each time they met German soldiers and officers; they were left without food during the day, without shelter during the night.

Many died on the way. Others, among which were women, children and priests, who were unable to follow, were shot dead. More than ten thousand of them were driven as far as Tirlemont, 15 miles from Louvain. Their sufferings are beyond description. The next day many others were driven further on from Tirlemont to Saint Trond and Hasselt.

And the Pope is silent.

“Courage is Greater than the Sword”